

HANDOUT: YOUTH AND STUDENT VOICE

<p style="text-align: center;">CONCEPT DEFINITION</p>	<p>Listening to and engaging youth in the service-learning process provides more ownership and greater learning opportunities. Students experience significant age appropriate challenges involving tasks that require thinking, initiative and problem solving as they demonstrate responsibility and decision-making in an environment safe enough to allow them to make mistakes and to succeed. Students actively participate in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing and planning the age-appropriate service projects; • Implementing the service project; • Conducting needs assessment process; • Developing and implementing reflection sessions, evaluation and celebration; • Creating/ fostering community and/or faith based partnerships; and • Other age appropriate activities.
<p style="text-align: center;">KEY ASPECTS</p>	<p>In order for youth voice to powerfully activate projects, students must be ACTIVE participants on the Service-Learning Advisory Board (SLAB). While adults facilitate the projects/programs, youth initiate and develop them. Students at all levels have the power to perform needs assessments, trainings, and reflections. By allowing them to fully engage with and complete projects/programs, service-learning becomes a more transforming and powerful experience.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS AS A DIFFERENTIATION PRACTICE</p>	<p>Since every student comes to the classroom with varying skills and experiences, service-learning projects have the potential to use youth for a variety of needs. By giving them the chance to develop skills and learn new ones, service-learning further develops not only the civic mindedness of students, but also their civic responsibility and leadership skills. Consider dividing up jobs based on differentiated abilities (such as logical-mathematical, intrapersonal, musical, etc) or skill sets (bodily kinesthetic, visual, oral).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">ISSUES</p>	<p>Perhaps one of the more difficult areas to initiate, teachers and administrators might feel challenged by the idea of turning over power of the curriculum to youth. However, it should be recognized that while the teacher and service-learning coordinator keep control of the curriculum, students are placed in the active seat of developing the project. If youth or student voice is missing from a project, it is clear in the results: oftentimes, students dismiss the end product, don't truly understand that which was performed, or aren't connected with the project. By allowing them access to the reality of service work and explaining the curricular ties, students become active learners, a critical component of most school reform plans.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING</p>	<p>Students who are active in classrooms learn, students who are passive in classrooms don't. If service is to be transformed into service-learning, students must be at the helm of projects. This can take a variety of forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce students to service-learning by reading or writing stories about service-learning, community leaders, or what it means to be civic minded • Set up student led school wide needs assessment opportunities • Invite community members and leaders into the classroom and have students facilitate the conversation by developing questions for consideration and reflection • Have students organize projects by initiating community contacts, facilitating trainings, work on evaluation plans, and stage activities <p>By working in a mutually respectful environment where students are seen as partners, the service-learning experience is strengthened.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">OTHER CRITICAL ASPECTS</p>	<p>AVOID "CABOOSE KIDS" – don't add kids to the process after the project has been decided upon, or after teachers, administrators, and community partners already are at the table. Spend time early on listening to what youth are interested in and what they feel challenges <i>their</i> community!! Emphasize the POWER OF ONE to make a difference in the community. If youth are to improve their understanding of and impact on community, they must serve as active leaders.</p>

HANDOUT: YOUTH AND STUDENT VOICE SELF-EVALUATION

The following evaluation should be completed by Service-Learning Advisory Boards, teachers, service-learning coordinators, community partners, and especially youth to determine how much impact youth have had in the development of a well-rounded service-learning project.

COMPLETED BY: _____

DATE: _____

	DONE	IN PROGRESS	NEED TO DO	DON'T KNOW
1. Students involved in the project come from a wide range of backgrounds; and include diverse learning styles, ethnicities, and interests. Exceptional needs students play a role in the project from the beginning.				
2. Students were consulted during the needs assessment process to find an appropriate and important community need to meet.				
3. Students were able to contact partners early in the project/program planning who could help support and further campaign on behalf of their learning and the project.				
4. Students are provided opportunities to reflect early in the project/program about what connections exist with academics and academic requirements.				
5. Students are active S.L.A.B. members and openly discuss their concerns and decide rules of conduct early in the project to create a community of learners.				
6. Students have a discussion with their family, friends, and neighbors to share their ideas, concerns, and beliefs related to their service-learning project/program.				
7. Students are active in facilitating trainings with community partners and community leaders during the initial phase of a project/program, and also are active in facilitating trainings with other school members to expand service-learning upon completion of their project/program.				
8. Students are granted the chance to develop project successes and challenges into an end-of-project performance and present this to their school, community partners, parents, community leaders, and media.				
9. Students are active in planning a day of celebration to demonstrate the service that was performed and the learning that was gained.				
10. Students are actively called upon to reflect throughout the project as to that which they have learned and the impact of their actions.				